



THE VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

June-July 2010

Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

VOL. 59 NO. 18

Calendar of Events

Tuesday June 29

12:00 Noon

Lunch and Learn

Speaker: Mike Darnell
California Policy Director
American Farmland Trust
Appetez Restaurant

Wednesday, July 14

6:00 p.m.

Board Meeting
League Office
720 13th St, Modesto

Thursday, July 15

5:00 p.m.

Valley Futures Forum
201 Needham St, Modesto
(\$10 at Door)

Tuesday July 27

12:00 noon

Lunch and Learn

Speaker: Tori Hughes
Patterson Chief of Police
Appetez Restaurant

This calendar is
current as of
printing. Check LWVSC
Website for updates
www.lwvstanislaus.org

Supervisor Chiesa speaks at Annual Meeting

Stanislaus County District 2 Supervisor Vito Chiesa spoke to LWVSC members and guests at the 62nd Annual Meeting in May. As owner of a family farm and active leader in the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, he realized that a person can make a difference in government. This experience piqued his interest in seeking elective office. Recognizing these are somber times for government at all levels, he predicts the worst is yet to come for local agencies.

His remarks focused on challenges facing agriculture in the county and for the Board of Supervisors. Agriculture is the “economic engine of the county”, generating \$2.5 million plus the multiplier effect of related enterprises.

- Property taxes lost through **Williamson Act** contracts are no longer being backfilled by the state. The county has absorbed this cost to continue the “single greatest tool for farmland preservation.”
- **Ag land mitigation**, part of the Ag Element of the General Plan, is currently in litigation. For businesses, the increased expenses resulting from ag land mitigation are “part of the cost of doing business” which are usually passed along to the consumer. This and Measure E make residential development in the county very difficult.
- **Ag buffers** to separate developments from farms are working well to protect farming.
- **Water export** is being studied to develop a policy limiting water export.
- **Truck parking** in rural areas is still being discussed to develop a practical policy.
- **Tertiary water treatment** is being proposed with a Modesto/Turlock project to increase irrigation water.
- **Westpark** should stay within the original footprint. “It will never have houses.” Mr. Chiesa favors a project with the least impact on farming.

Supervisor Chiesa noted that his views usually align with the Farm Bureau. He is looking forward to the opportunity to reshape government for the future.

Marie Bairey, Local Action Director

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Lunch and Learn
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Lynn Kelso

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Lunch and Learn
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Nominating
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League Office
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president. Recently I attended a session for League presidents at the LWVC Leadership Council in Sacramento. As I listened to the presentations, I was reminded of all the things our local League does so well. Our League has had capable and effective leaders who have guided our organization and earned us a respected place in our community.

Previous leaders have safeguarded our nonpartisan reputation. This enables us to hold respected, thoughtful candidate forums in which all eligible candidates are invited to participate. It enables us to learn as much as we can about both sides of an issue before we decide to take a position. It enables us to make people on any side of the political spectrum feel welcome and respected at League meetings.

To continue this leadership, the Board of Directors discussed and adopted our nonpartisan policy at the June meeting. It is posted on our website (www.lwvstanislaus.org/) for you to read. We wanted to clarify our nonpartisan position for new Board members as well as for our members at large. Although we are a nonpartisan organization, we are also a political organization. We encourage individual members to participate fully in the party of their choice, to find and support candidates and to seek elected office. We ask our members to keep their League activity and their partisan political activity completely separate and distinct. And we ask that they represent the League only if they have been so designated by the Board.

Another thing I was reminded of about our League is that we have embraced technology. Our members use e-mail to communicate, we have our own website and Facebook page, our financial records are stored on a dedicated laptop with backup files on flash drives, and we have text files of just about everything. In other words, WE ROCK!

To continue to show leadership in this area, Jean Tenney and I recently participated in two webinars about e-newsletters sponsored by LWVC. These excellent webinars are free to all League members and are downloadable from <http://ca.lwv.org/lwvonly/>. All you need is a computer and an internet connection.

When you read this, I will have attended the LWVUS Convention in Atlanta as your delegate. Watch for my Convention update next month.

Susan Novak, President

LUNCH AND LEARN

March 30 Lunch and Learn

Matt Machado, Director of Public Works, Stanislaus The North County Corridor

Mr. Matt Machado is the Authority Manager of the North County Corridor Project. This project is planned as an east-west connector high-capacity roadway between Oakdale and Salida. It will be a high-speed highway designed to meet future traffic needs, improve safety in Northern Stanislaus County, ease traffic on parallel roads in the area, and promote interregional connectivity while providing for economic growth.

Mr. Machado explained that this project replaces the originally planned Oakdale Bypass. It will be funded by Regional Improvement Program funds and developer fees, along with \$91 million already committed by Caltrans - thus bringing taxpayer dollars back to our community. The project, according to a handout provided to those in attendance, will "fulfill the vision of the Joint Powers Authority, comprised of the elected officials from Stanislaus County and the Cities of Modesto, Riverbank and Oakdale." The proposed first step is to adopt a new corridor for State Route 108. It is approximately 18 miles in length, running from McHenry Ave. near SR 219 (Kiernan Ave.), northwest near Riverbank to SR 120, approximately six miles east of the City of Oakdale. Again according to a handout, the ultimate roadway is planned to be a "multi-lane freeway/expressway that will bypass the cities of Riverbank and Oakdale."

The estimated cost of the project, including construction, right-of-way, and project development support is in the range of \$650-\$750 million, and is to be completed in phases based on need and funding availability. A first step toward interregional funding was Senate Bill 532 (2009) sponsored by Senator Cogdill which amended the Streets & Highway Code to add the segment of State Route 108 from Route 132 in Modesto to Route 120 east of Oakdale into the system of interregional routes. Mr. Machado addressed the many concerns and questions of those in attendance at this interesting and informative program.

April 27 Lunch and Learn

Ryan Svehla, Commonwealth of Modesto "Branding Modesto"

CommonWealth Modesto is a group of business leaders with the goal of making positive changes in our community while mentoring young professionals. Modesto suffers from a negative public image as the result of a string of nationwide headlines trumpeting crimes involving murder, auto theft, meth production in the county, and our huge numbers of housing foreclosures.

This group of professionals wants to rebrand Modesto by promoting the city's authentic qualities and attributes. They

have set their goal as "redefining the City of Modesto's brand and integrating this brand into all economic development, city government, tourism and resident efforts." They seek to promote a public perception of our city as a hospitable, family oriented community.

To this end they conducted a public survey which showed that 53% of the respondents believe that the city's image is worsening. The central location and small-town feel of the community were the most liked things about the area. Their vision for Modesto's future includes

- a hospitable, family-oriented community
- a vital agricultural community
- a public image as a centrally located city with beautiful trees, small town feel and vibrant downtown.

From this survey, CommonWealth Modesto developed their brand: "Modesto Is Alive," and outlined its key concepts: agriculture and industry, community, location, culture, parks & outdoors, hometown heroes, and small town feel. From these, CommonWealth Modesto will develop a marketing strategy that will promote Modesto as well as encouraging our residents to start using positive images when we talk about our city to outsiders.

Mr. Svehla said that currently Modesto has no brand, and negative news about our area is filling the vacuum. He hopes that positive branding will change that.

A heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to this year's Lunch & Learn Program: to Appetez Restaurant, the Board members, all of our speakers, and especially to all of you who came and participated in the program.

Lee DeLaMare, 2009-2010 Lunch and Learn Director

DIVERSITY POLICY:

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County in both its values and practices affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

In Memory

It is with great sorrow that we say good-bye to three long-time members and supporters: Helen Gordon, Albion Fenderson and George Gackle, They will be greatly missed.

July 27 Lunch and Learn: Tori Hughes, Chief of Police Services, Patterson

The first female Police Chief of Patterson will speak about law enforcement from a female perspective. She attended Long Beach State College where she pursued her interest in criminal justice and obtained her BA degree in 1998. Realizing that education is the pathway to advancement, she obtained a Master's in Business Administration from National University in 2000..

Chief Hughes started with the Stanislaus Sheriff's Department in 1999 as a deputy. Through leadership and service, she moved into the community deputy role for the city of Salida. That assignment got her recognition and a promotion into Detectives, where her focus was on crimes against children and elder abuse.

More advancements ensued. With a promotion to sergeant in the Patrol Division of the Sheriff's Office her responsibilities involved supervising a staff of Community Service Officers, ID technicians and the Property and Evidence Division. While in this assignment she received multiple recognitions locally and throughout the state. Chief Hughes is now called upon to teach processes in the Post Learning Program for the State of California.

Advancement did not stop there. With a promotion to lieutenant she became the Watch Commander. She then moved to the North Area Command in Riverbank, where she effectively led the organization and staff.

Currently she is the Chief of Police Services for the City of Patterson. Chief Hughes continues to make a difference in changing the community by facilitating relationships between law enforcement and the citizens. Chief Hughes currently holds board positions with Stanislaus Office of Education's Leadership Academy, PAL (Police Activities League) and YCD (Youth Development Council). She is also an active member of Modesto's Rotary. Please join us at this interesting presentation.

Welcome Our Newest Members

Jonaca K. Driscoll

Mrs. Howard Goldor

Elizabeth Vestal

We look forward to seeing you at our events

Voter Service

Forums

League members were busy with forums and voter registration prior to the June primary elections. The League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County sponsored forums for five races: County Supervisor for Districts 3 and 4, Sheriff, Auditor-Controller and Clerk Recorder. Each of the forums was well attended with 40 to 90 people in the audience. Moderators were Susan Novak, Stella Beratlis and Amy Wolfe. The forums were broadcast over Comcast Channel 7 and Charter Channel 19. They were covered with prominent stories by the Modesto Bee.

The following League members assisted as question gatherers, question sorters, timers, and greeters: Joan Goldsmith, Diane Bartlett, Marie Bairey, Diedra Bush West, Marsha Waggoner, Marge Lipsky, Susan Novak, Joan Patterson, Ellen Meyer, and Ellen Dunbar

The League provided a moderator and question sorters for a forum, sponsored by the Oakdale AAUW and the Oakdale Sunrise Rotary. This forum included candidates for Judge and for Sheriff. The forum was taped to be played on Comcast Cable and Charter (Ch 9.) It was also streamed on the internet. Amy Wolfe was the moderator. Ellen Dunbar and Susan Novak sorted questions.

Voter Registration

Voter Registration tables were set up in the Modesto, Turlock and Salida libraries on May 24, the last day for voters to register. Members Marsha Waggoner, Richard Anderson, Phyllis Hart, Marie Bairey, Jean Tenney, Susan Novak, Lee De La Mare, Colleen Norby and Hannah Renning registered voters.

Special thanks to Susan Novak for providing leadership for our voter service committee and for keeping the media informed about the forums and voter registration.

Ellen Dunbar, Voter Service Director

**I WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO
YOURS BY JOINING
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF STANISLAUS COUNTY!**

Student Membership \$15 _____

Individual Membership \$60 _____

Household Membership \$90 _____

Please contact me with more information:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone (for directory): _____

Email: _____

MAIL TO

LWVSC

P.O. Box E

Modesto, CA 95352.

State and National

Take Action on Campaign Finance Reform

Congress is formulating legislation to mitigate the damaging effects of the recent Supreme Court Decision in *Citizens United v. FEC*. This decision allows foreign and domestic corporations and unions to secretly spend unlimited funds on political campaigns.

The DISCLOSE ACT, H.R.5175 will be voted on very soon. Important provisions of this Act will amend the Federal Election Act of 1971 to prohibit foreign influence in elections; require complete disclosure of corporate and union contributions to elections and campaign advertising; and prohibit government contractors from spending in such elections.

Contact your Representative to support H.R. 5175. Immediate action is necessary to protect the integrity of the 2010 elections.

Talking Points from the LWV US web site:

1. Secret money has no place in American democracy;
2. Corporations and unions should have to stand by their ads;
3. Federal bailout money should stay out of electioneering;
4. Coordinated spending should be open spending;
5. Foreign corporations should never have a hand in American elections.

For further information about the progress of this bill and to learn more about what the League is doing to support Campaign Finance Reform, go to www.lwv.org.

Keep an eye on the LWVUS web page for further updates on the progress of this bill, or sign up for automatic calls to act.

Anne Krabach, State and National Director

Sign up forE-mail Voter!

In an effort to reduce expenses, which is especially important in these times of tight budgets and scarce dollars, LWVSC is offering our *Voter* to members via e-mail starting with this issue. The *Voter* is already available on our website. This change will save postage and printing costs, and it will take advantage of available technology. One great example: you can go directly from the e-mail version to the website of any link you click on.

To date, 50 LWVSC households have agreed to receive the *Voter* by e-mail; many were eager to "save a tree or two". It is not too late for members and donors to make the change. If you want to receive your *Voter* via e-mail, contact Marie Bairey (localaction@lwvstanislaus.org), or call her at 523-0663 to get on the e-list.

Board Highlights

- Discussed and updated the LWVSC nonpartisan policy
- Appointed an Executive Committee according to the bylaws. The committee members are President, Susan Novak; VP, Stella Beratlis; Secretary, Laurie Carley; Treasurer, Seena Rhine; and Board Administrator, Lynn Kelso.
- Approved formation of an Ad Hoc Committee to review and report to the Board on options for administering our local League's Ed Fund. Ed Fund money is currently administered by LWVC, but as of the 2010-2011 LWVC budget year a 3% administration fee on the funds will be assessed.
- Approved formation of a Bylaws Review Committee with Marie Bairey representing the Board on the committee. A periodic review of the bylaws is recommended by LWVC and LWVUS.



Laurie Carley, Secretary

Renew Your Membership Now!

It is dues renewal time. Thank you to all of you who have already renewed your membership for 2010-2011. If you have not yet renewed, please do so promptly and avoid being left out of the new membership directory. When renewing, please make sure that you include your up-to-date telephone number and email address. Thank you.

Colleen Norby, Membership Committee

News You Can Use

Health Care Reform

For the most recent, complete, and understandable information and a timeline for implementation go to <http://docs.house.gov/energycommerce/TIMELINE.pdf>

We propose to get into the great parties and to work from the inside. We do not fear issues, and we do not fear the future. We'll not vote as women, but as American citizens, and we are unafraid,

Carrie Chapman Catt, 1919

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
LWV Modesto
P.O. Box E
Modesto, CA 95352**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS
(Check Website for Updates)**

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|---------------------------|--|
| Tuesday, June 29 | 12 Noon Lunch and Learn, Appetez Restaurant Roseburg Square, Modesto \$11. For special needs Call a day ahead Speaker: Mike Darnell, California Policy Director, American Farm- land Trust Topic: Groundswell - improving the quality of life in the San Joaquin Valley through better land use decisions |
| Wednesday, July 14 | 6:00 p.m. Board Meeting League Office, 720 13th Street, Modesto |
| Thursday, July 15 | 5:00 p.m. Valley Futures Forum 201 Needham Street, Modesto Speaker: John Anderson of Anderson/Kim on “Straight Talk on Building and Rebuilding: taking the long view in tough times” (\$10 fee at the Door) |
| Tuesday, July 27 | 12 Noon Lunch and Learn, Appetez Restaurant Speaker: Tori Hughes, Patterson Chief of Police |